

(ii) 900 clock hours for a program measured in clock hours.

(b) *Definitions.* For purposes of paragraph (a) of this section—

(1) A week is a consecutive seven-day period;

(2) A week of instructional time is any week in which at least one day of regularly scheduled instruction or examinations occurs or, after the last scheduled day of classes for a term or payment period, at least one day of study for final examinations occurs; and

(3) Instructional time does not include any vacation periods, homework, or periods of orientation or counseling.

(c) *Reduction in the length of an academic year.* (1) Upon the written request of an institution, the Secretary may approve, for good cause, an academic year of 26 through 29 weeks of instructional time for educational programs offered by the institution if the institution offers a two-year program leading to an associate degree or a four-year program leading to a baccalaureate degree.

(2) An institution's written request must—

(i) Identify each educational program for which the institution requests a reduction, and the requested number of weeks of instructional time for that program;

(ii) Demonstrate good cause for the requested reductions; and

(iii) Include any other information that the Secretary may require to determine whether to grant the request.

(3)(i) The Secretary approves the request of an eligible institution for a reduction in the length of its academic year if the institution has demonstrated good cause for granting the request and the institution's accrediting agency and State licensing agency have approved the request.

(ii) If the Secretary approves the request, the approval terminates when the institution's program participation agreement expires. The institution may request an extension of that ap-

proval as part of the recertification process.

(Approved by the Office of Management and Budget under control number 1845-0022)

(Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1088)

[67 FR 67071, Nov. 1, 2002, as amended at 71 FR 45693, Aug. 9, 2006]

§ 668.4 Payment period.

(a) *Payment periods for an eligible program that measures progress in credit hours and uses standard terms or non-standard terms that are substantially equal in length.* For a student enrolled in an eligible program that measures progress in credit hours and uses standard terms (semesters, trimesters, or quarters), or for a student enrolled in an eligible program that measures progress in credit hours and uses non-standard terms that are substantially equal in length, the payment period is the academic term.

(b) *Payment periods for an eligible program that measures progress in credit hours and uses nonstandard terms that are not substantially equal in length.* For a student enrolled in an eligible program that measures progress in credit hours and uses nonstandard terms that are not substantially equal in length—

(1) For Pell Grant, ACG, National SMART Grant, FSEOG, Perkins Loan, and TEACH Grant program funds, the payment period is the academic term;

(2) For FFEL and Direct Loan program funds—

(i) For a student enrolled in an eligible program that is one academic year or less in length—

(A) The first payment period is the period of time in which the student successfully completes half of the number of credit hours in the program and half of the number of weeks of instructional time in the program; and

(B) The second payment period is the period of time in which the student successfully completes the program; and

(ii) For a student enrolled in an eligible program that is more than one academic year in length—

(A) For the first academic year and any subsequent full academic year—

(1) The first payment period is the period of time in which the student

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successfully completes half of the number of credit hours in the academic year and half of the number of weeks of instructional time in the academic year; and

(2) The second payment period is the period of time in which the student successfully completes the academic year;

(B) For any remaining portion of an eligible program that is more than half an academic year but less than a full academic year in length—

(1) The first payment period is the period of time in which the student successfully completes half of the number of credit hours in the remaining portion of the program and half of the number of weeks of instructional time remaining in the program; and

(2) The second payment period is the period of time in which the student successfully completes the remainder of the program; and

(C) For any remaining portion of an eligible program that is not more than half an academic year, the payment period is the remainder of the program.

(c) *Payment periods for an eligible program that measures progress in credit hours and does not have academic terms or for a program that measures progress in clock hours.* (1) For a student enrolled in an eligible program that is one academic year or less in length—

(i) The first payment period is the period of time in which the student successfully completes half of the number of credit hours or clock hours, as applicable, in the program and half of the number of weeks of instructional time in the program; and

(ii) The second payment period is the period of time in which the student successfully completes the program or the remainder of the program.

(2) For a student enrolled in an eligible program that is more than one academic year in length—

(i) For the first academic year and any subsequent full academic year—

(A) The first payment period is the period of time in which the student successfully completes half of the number of credit hours or clock hours, as applicable, in the academic year and half of the number of weeks of instructional time in the academic year; and

(B) The second payment period is the period of time in which the student successfully completes the academic year;

(ii) For any remaining portion of an eligible program that is more than half an academic year but less than a full academic year in length—

(A) The first payment period is the period of time in which the student successfully completes half of the number of credit hours or clock hours, as applicable, in the remaining portion of the program and half of the number of weeks of instructional time remaining in the program; and

(B) The second payment period is the period of time in which the student successfully completes the remainder of the program; and

(iii) For any remaining portion of an eligible program that is not more than half an academic year, the payment period is the remainder of the program.

(3) For purposes of paragraphs (c)(1) and (c)(2) of this section, if an institution is unable to determine when a student has successfully completed half of the credit hours or clock hours in a program, academic year, or remainder of a program, the student is considered to begin the second payment period of the program, academic year, or remainder of a program at the later of the date, as determined by the institution, on which the student has successfully completed—

(i) Half of the academic coursework in the program, academic year, or remainder of the program; or

(ii) Half of the number of weeks of instructional time in the program, academic year, or remainder of the program.

(d) *Application of the cohort default rate exemption.* Notwithstanding paragraphs (a), (b), and (c) of this section, if 34 CFR 682.604(c)(10) or 34 CFR 685.301(b)(8) applies to an eligible program that measures progress in credit hours and uses nonstandard terms, an eligible program that measures progress in credit hours and does not have academic terms, or an eligible program that measures progress in clock hours, the payment period for purposes of FFEL and Direct Loan funds is the loan period for those portions of the program to which 34 CFR

682.604(c)(10) or 34 CFR 685.301(b)(8) applies.

(e) *Excused absences.* For purposes of this section, in determining whether a student successfully completes the clock hours in a payment period, an institution may include clock hours for which the student has an excused absence (i.e., an absence that a student does not have to make up) if—

(1) The institution has a written policy that permits excused absences; and

(2) The number of excused absences under the written policy for purposes of this paragraph (e) does not exceed the lesser of—

(i) The policy on excused absences of the institution's accrediting agency or, if the institution has more than one accrediting agency, the agency designated under 34 CFR 600.11(b);

(ii) The policy on excused absences of any State agency that licenses the institution or otherwise legally authorizes the institution to operate in the State; or

(iii) Ten percent of the clock hours in the payment period.

(f) *Re-entry within 180 days.* If a student withdraws from a program described in paragraph (c) of this section during a payment period and then reenters the same program within 180 days, the student remains in that same payment period when he or she returns and, subject to conditions established by the Secretary or by the FFEL lender or guaranty agency, is eligible to receive any title IV, HEA program funds for which he or she was eligible prior to withdrawal, including funds that were returned by the institution or student under the provisions of § 668.22.

(g) *Re-entry after 180 days or transfer.*

(1) Except as provided in paragraph (g)(3) of this section, and subject to the conditions of paragraph (g)(2) of this section, an institution calculates new payment periods for the remainder of a student's program based on paragraph (c) of this section, for a student who withdraws from a program described in paragraph (c) of this section, and—

(i) Reenters that program after 180 days;

(ii) Transfers into another program at the same institution within any time period; or

(iii) Transfers into a program at another institution within any time period.

(2) For a student described in paragraph (g)(1) of this section—

(i) For the purpose of calculating payment periods only, the length of the program is the number of credit hours and the number of weeks of instructional time, or the number of clock hours and the number of weeks of instructional time, that the student has remaining in the program he or she enters or reenters; and

(ii) If the remaining hours and weeks constitute half of an academic year or less, the remaining hours constitute one payment period.

(3) Notwithstanding the provisions of paragraph (g)(1) of this section, an institution may consider a student who transfers into another program at the same institution to remain in the same payment period if—

(i) The student is continuously enrolled at the institution;

(ii) The coursework in the payment period the student is transferring out of is substantially similar to the coursework the student will be taking when he or she first transfers into the new program;

(iii) The payment periods are substantially equal in length in weeks of instructional time and credit hours or clock hours, as applicable;

(iv) There are little or no changes in institutional charges associated with the payment period to the student; and

(v) The credits from the payment period the student is transferring out of are accepted toward the new program.

(h) *Definitions.* For purposes of this section—

(1) Terms are *substantially equal in length* if no term in the program is more than two weeks of instructional time longer than any other term in that program; and

(2) A student *successfully completes* credit hours or clock hours if the institution considers the student to have passed the coursework associated with those hours.

(Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1070 *et seq.*)

[72 FR 62025, Nov. 1, 2007, as amended at 73 FR 35492, June 23, 2008]